

## Human Consciousness – Exercises Everyone knows that ! Social Media



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Consciousness is the state or quality of awareness, or, of being aware of an external object or something within oneself. It has been defined variously in terms of sentience, awareness, subjectivity, the ability to experience or to feel, wakefulness, having a sense of selfhood or soul, the fact that there is something "that it is like" to "have" or "be" it, and the executive control system of the mind, or the state or quality of awareness, or, of being aware of an external object or something within oneself. In contemporary philosophy its definition is often hinted at via the logical possibility of its absence, the philosophical zombie, which is defined as a being whose behavior and function are identical to one's own yet there is "no-one in there" experiencing it.

Despite the difficulty in definition, many philosophers believe that there is a broadly shared underlying intuition about what consciousness is. As Max Velmans and Susan Schneider wrote in *The Blackwell Companion to Consciousness*: "Anything that we are aware of at a given moment forms part of our consciousness, making conscious experience at once the most familiar and most mysterious aspect of our lives."

Western philosophers, since the time of Descartes and Locke, have struggled to comprehend the nature of consciousness and identify its essential properties. Issues of concern in the philosophy of consciousness include whether the concept is fundamentally coherent; whether consciousness can ever be explained mechanistically; whether non-human consciousness exists and if so how can it be recognized; how consciousness relates to language; whether consciousness can be understood in a way that does not require a dualistic distinction between mental and physical states or properties; and whether it may ever be

possible for computing machines like computers or robots to be conscious, a topic studied in the field of artificial intelligence.

Thanks to developments in technology over the past few decades, consciousness has become a significant topic of interdisciplinary research in cognitive science, with significant contributions from fields such as psychology, neuropsychology and neuroscience. The primary focus is on understanding what it means biologically and psychologically for information to be present in consciousness—that is, on determining the neural and psychological correlates of consciousness. The majority of experimental studies assess consciousness in humans by asking subjects for a verbal report of their experiences (e.g., "tell me if you notice anything when I do this"). Issues of interest include phenomena such as subliminal perception, blindsight, denial of impairment, and altered states of consciousness produced by alcohol and other drugs, or spiritual or meditative techniques.

In medicine, consciousness is assessed by observing a patient's arousal and responsiveness, and can be seen as a continuum of states ranging from full alertness and comprehension, through disorientation, delirium, loss of meaningful communication, and finally loss of movement in response to painful stimuli. Issues of practical concern include how the presence of consciousness can be assessed in severely ill, comatose, or anesthetized people, and how to treat conditions in which consciousness is impaired or disrupted.

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